THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (e) No, Sir, there is no proposal to wind up the CGHS.

Heavy metals in Ayurvedic medicines

66. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ayurvedic medicines being exported to various countries contain heavy metals;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government have issued a notification that all heavy metals should be indicated specifically on the labels;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what are the permissible limits of metal content in the medicines according to the WHO?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (d) Regulatory agencies in some countries have reportedly found heavy metals above the permissible limit in some Ayurvedic medicines from India. The Government has issued an order on 14th October, 2005 under Section 30 EEB of the Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940 for mandatory testing of heavy metals, namely, Arsenic, Lead, Mercury and Cadmium in respect of every batch of purely herbal Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani drugs to be exported. This is a process of self-certification for export purposes. Permissible limits of heavy metals have been prescribed, namely, (i) Lead (Pb)-10ppm' (ii) Cadmium (Cd)-0.30 ppm; (iii) Arsenic (As)-10 ppm and (iv) Mercury (Hg)-1 ppm.

Government have also issued an order reiterating the labeling provisions under Rule 161 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 regarding mentioning the name of all the ingredients used in the manufacture of Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani drugs either on the label of the container or on a leaflet to be inserted inside the container of the medicine. All State Licensing Authorities have been directed to enforce this provision.